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SEGA
KNUCKLES
THE ECHIDNA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
46971
PENDERS • SPAZIANTE • GALAN
GROSSMAN • WILLIAMS • PEPOY

KNUCKLES™

Book Ten

The Forgotten Tribe

Part One of Three

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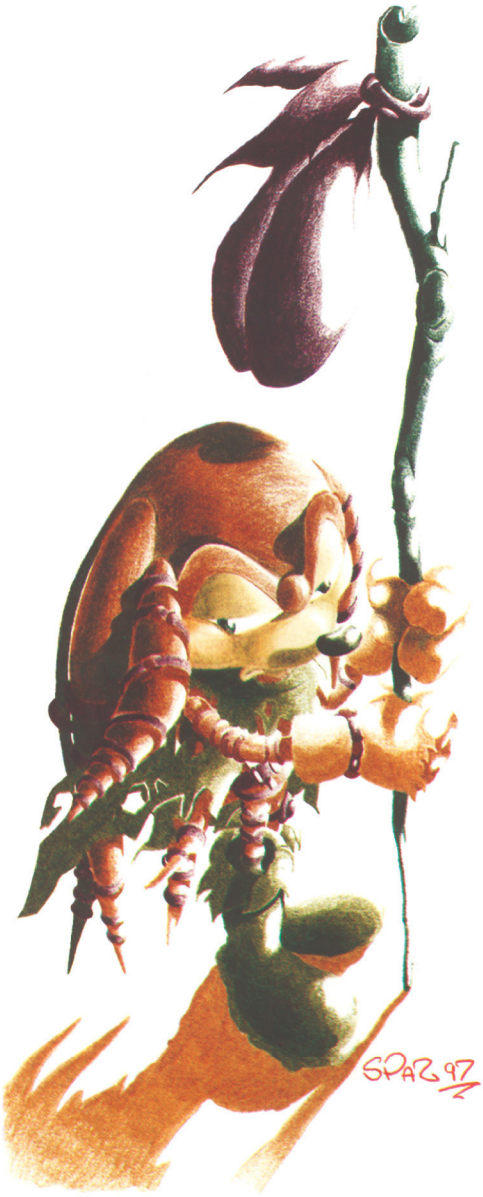
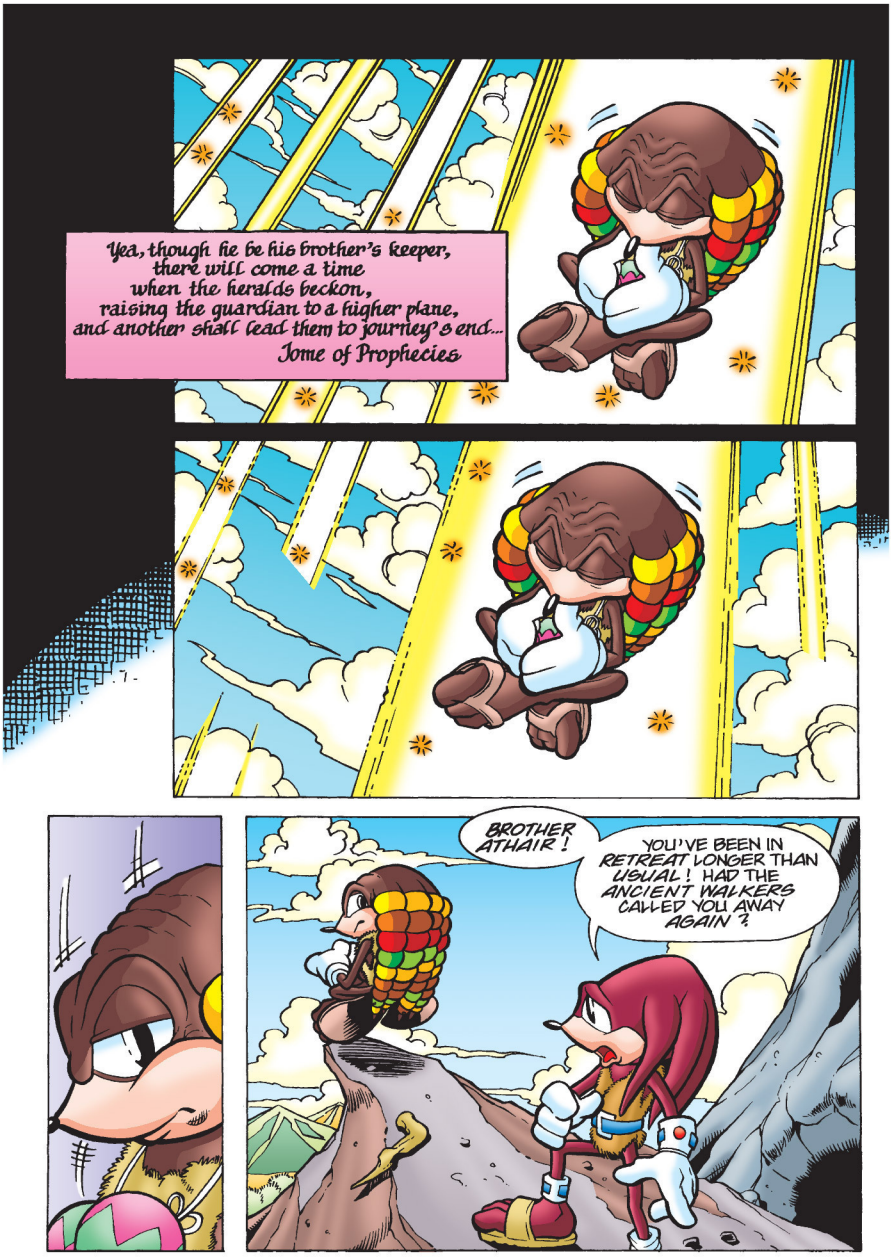
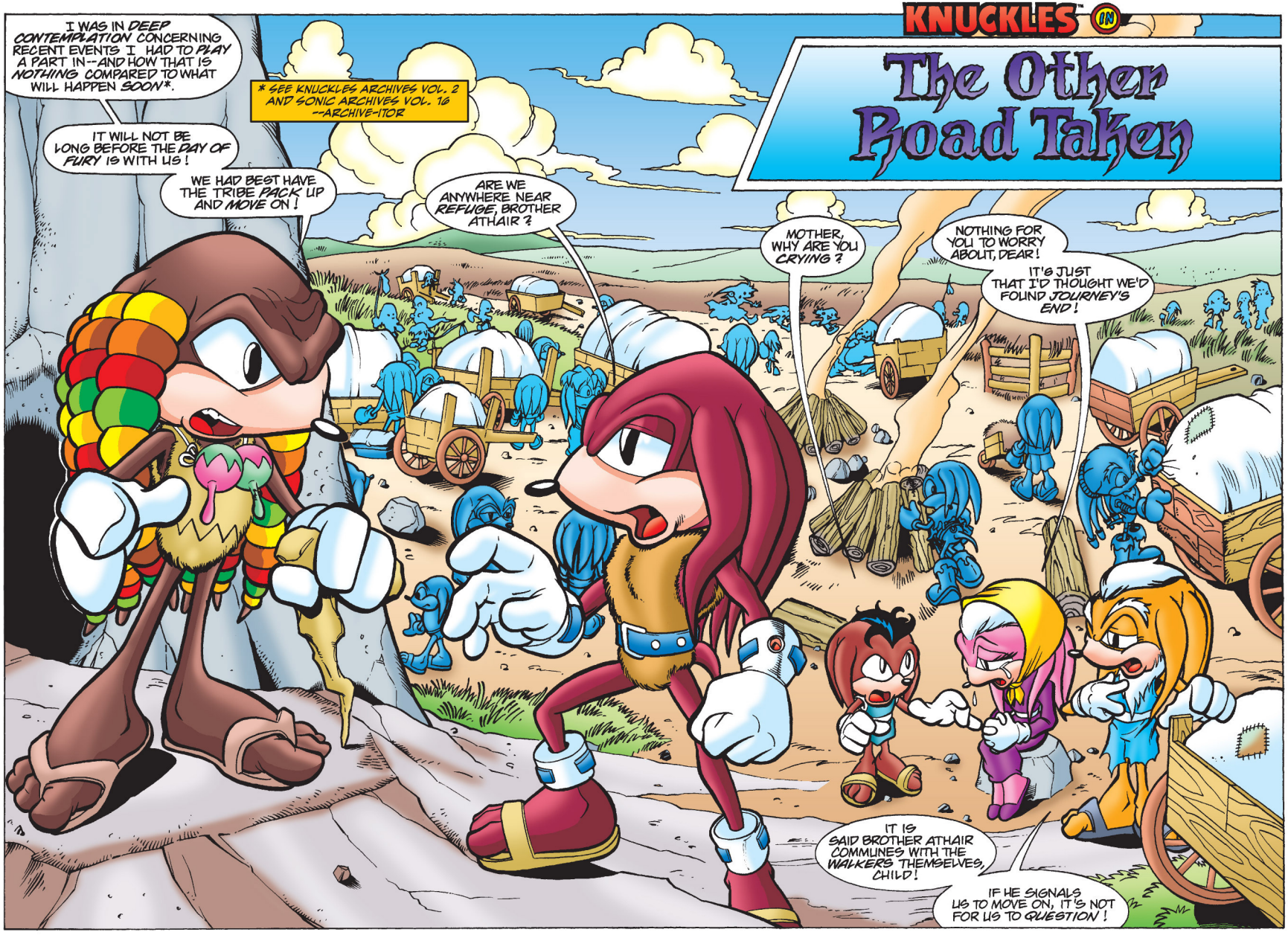


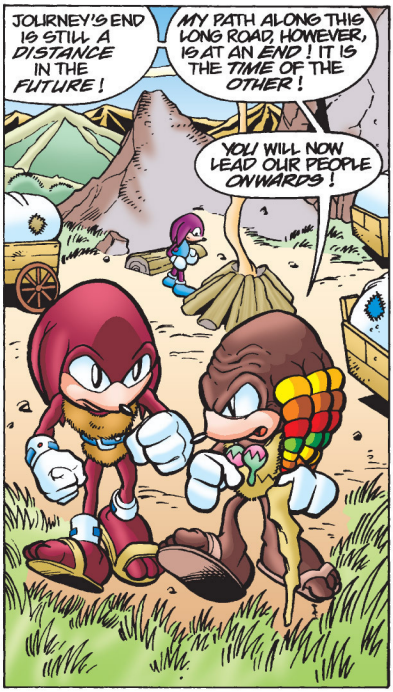
Born to the most noble of Echidna houses, the latest to continue the family heritage and responsibility as Guardian of the Floating Island, defender of all from the forces of evil from the world beyond as well as those who would threaten within, he is none other than Knuckles the Echidna!

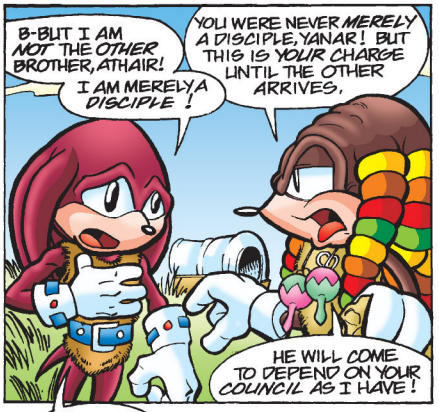
It is the dawn of a new day. Knuckles has survived his recent battle against the forces of The Dark Legion, Enerjak and Mammoth Mogul. He has also survived some of the deadliest perils he has ever encountered within his short lifespan. Now, he finds himself confronted with making a choice between his obligations and responsibilities to the inhabitants of The Floating Island versus his responsibilities to Echidnas everywhere, no matter where they may be.

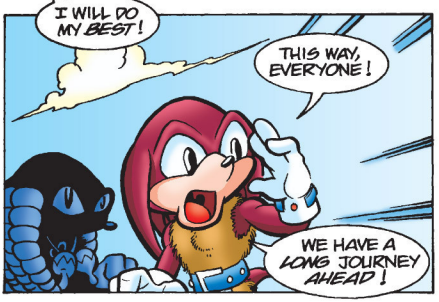
Helping Knuckles find his way is the last Echidna in the world he'd ever turn to, his great-grandfather Athair. It is with him that our tale truly begins...

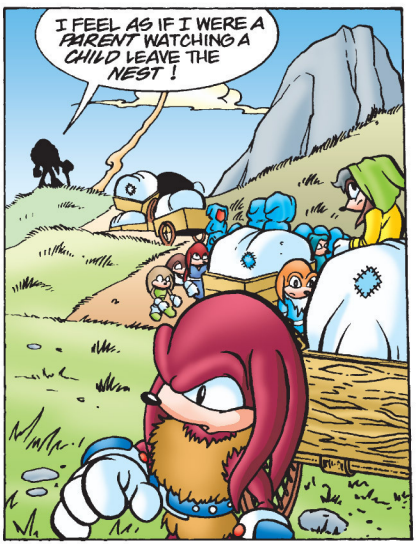

Yea, though he be his brother's keeper,
there will come a time
when the heralds beckon,
raising the guardian to a higher plane,
and another shall lead them to journey's end...
Tome of Prophecies
BROTHER ATHAIR!
YOU'VE BEEN IN RETREAT LONGER THAN USUAL! HAD THE ANCIENT WALKERS CALLED YOU AWAY AGAIN?

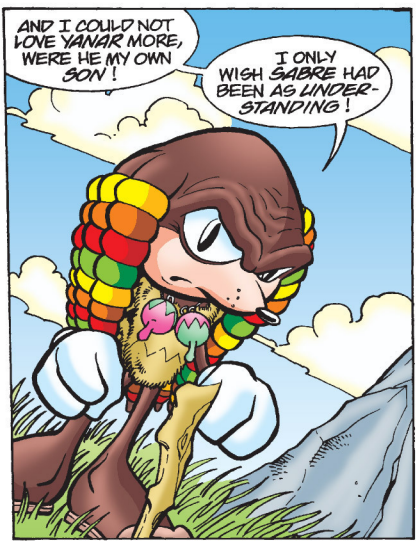

KNUCKLES IN
The Other Road Taken
I WAS IN DEEP CONTEMPLATION CONCERNING RECENT EVENTS I HAD TO PLAY A PART IN--AND HOW THAT IS NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT WILL HAPPEN SOON*.
* SEE KNUCKLES ARCHIVES VOL. 2 AND SONIC ARCHIVES VOL. 16 --ARCHIVE-ITOR
IT WILL NOT BE LONG BEFORE THE DAY OF FURY IS WITH US!
WE HAD BEST HAVE THE TRIBE PACK UP AND MOVE ON!
ARE WE ANYWHERE NEAR REFUGE, BROTHER ATHAIR?
MOTHER, WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
NOTHING FOR YOU TO WORRY ABOUT, DEAR!
IT'S JUST THAT I'D THOUGHT WE'D FOUND JOURNEY'S END!
IT IS SAID BROTHER ATHAIR COMMUNES WITH THE WALKERS THEMSELVES, CHILD!
IF HE SIGNALS US TO MOVE ON, IT'S NOT FOR US TO QUESTION!

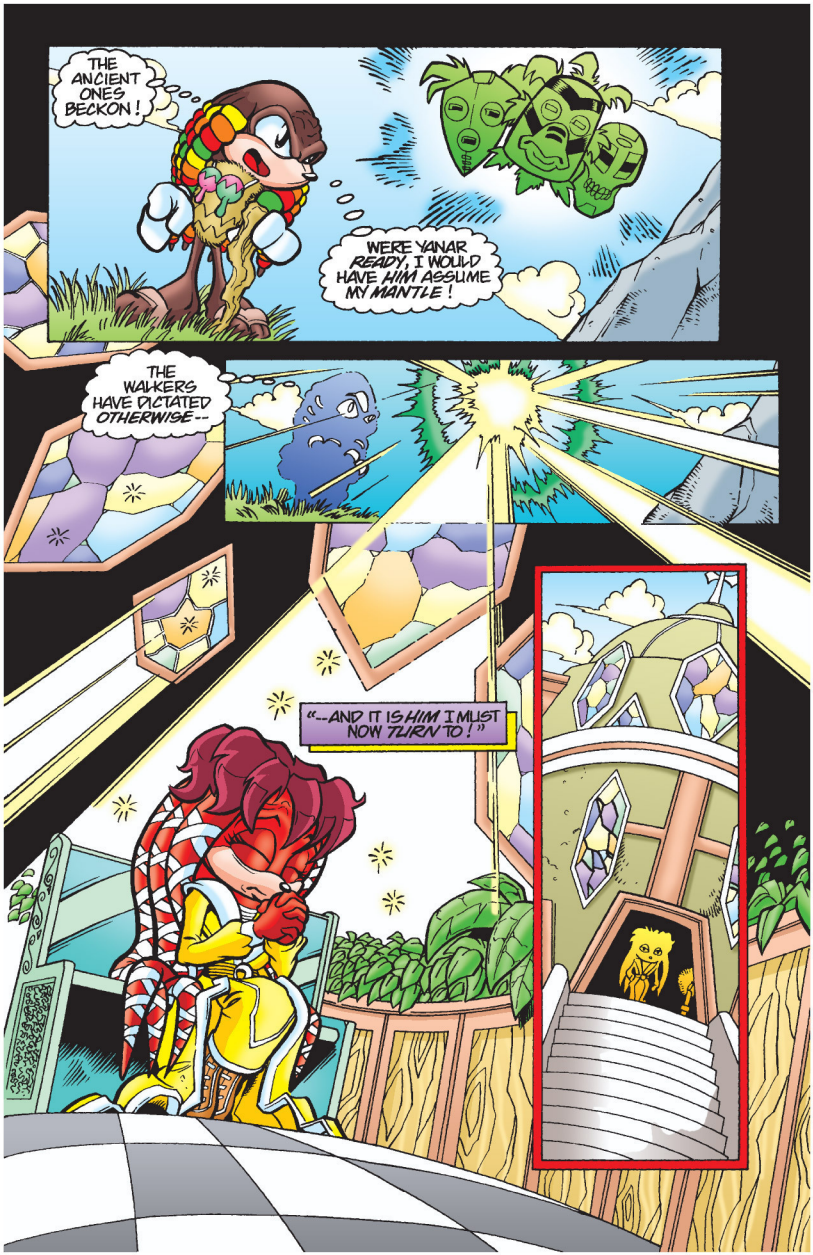

JOURNEY'S END IS STILL A DISTANCE IN THE FUTURE!
MY PATH ALONG THIS LONG ROAD, HOWEVER, IS AT AN END! IT IS THE TIME OF THE OTHER!
YOU WILL NOW LEAD OUR PEOPLE ONWARDS!

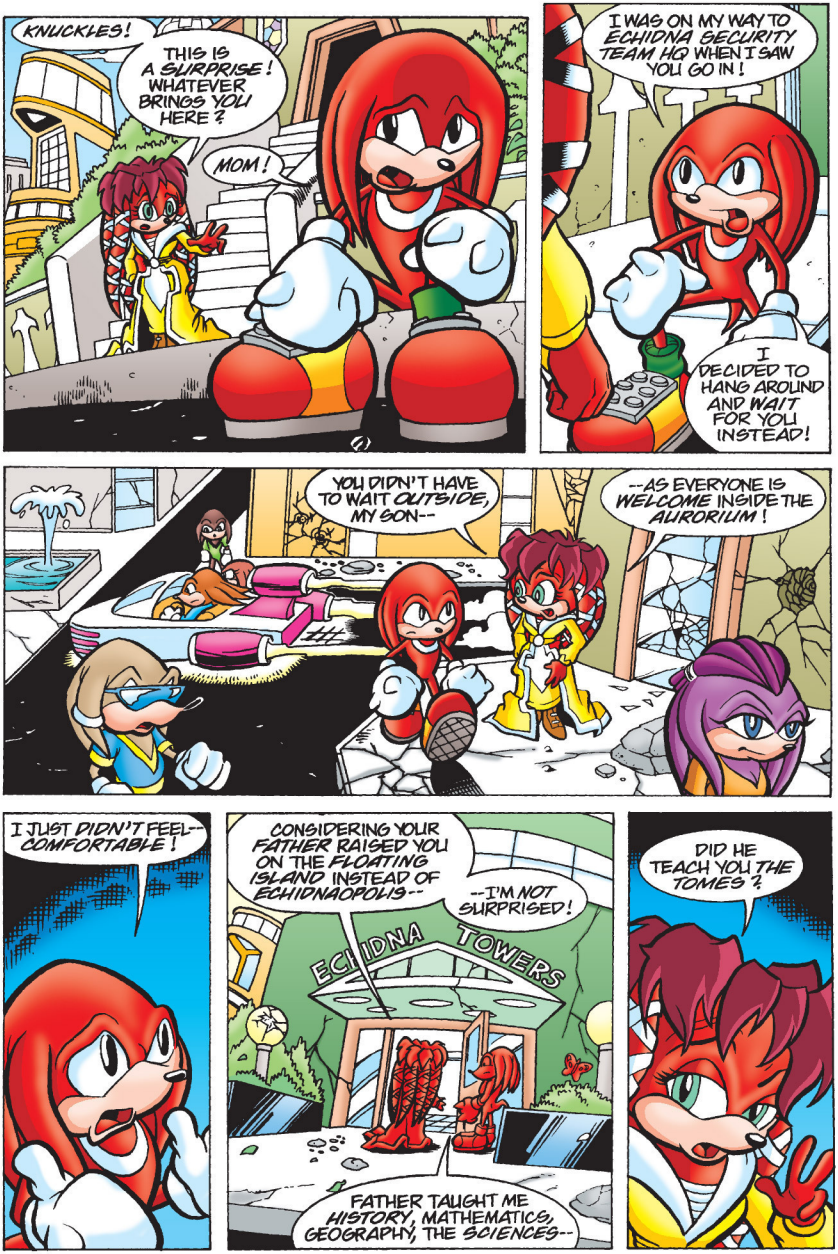

B-BUT I AM NOT THE OTHER BROTHER, ATHAIR!
I AM MERELY A DISCIPLE!
YOU WERE NEVER MERELY A DISCIPLE, YANAR! BUT THIS IS YOUR CHARGE UNTIL THE OTHER ARRIVES.
HE WILL COME TO DEPEND ON YOUR COUNCIL AS I HAVE!

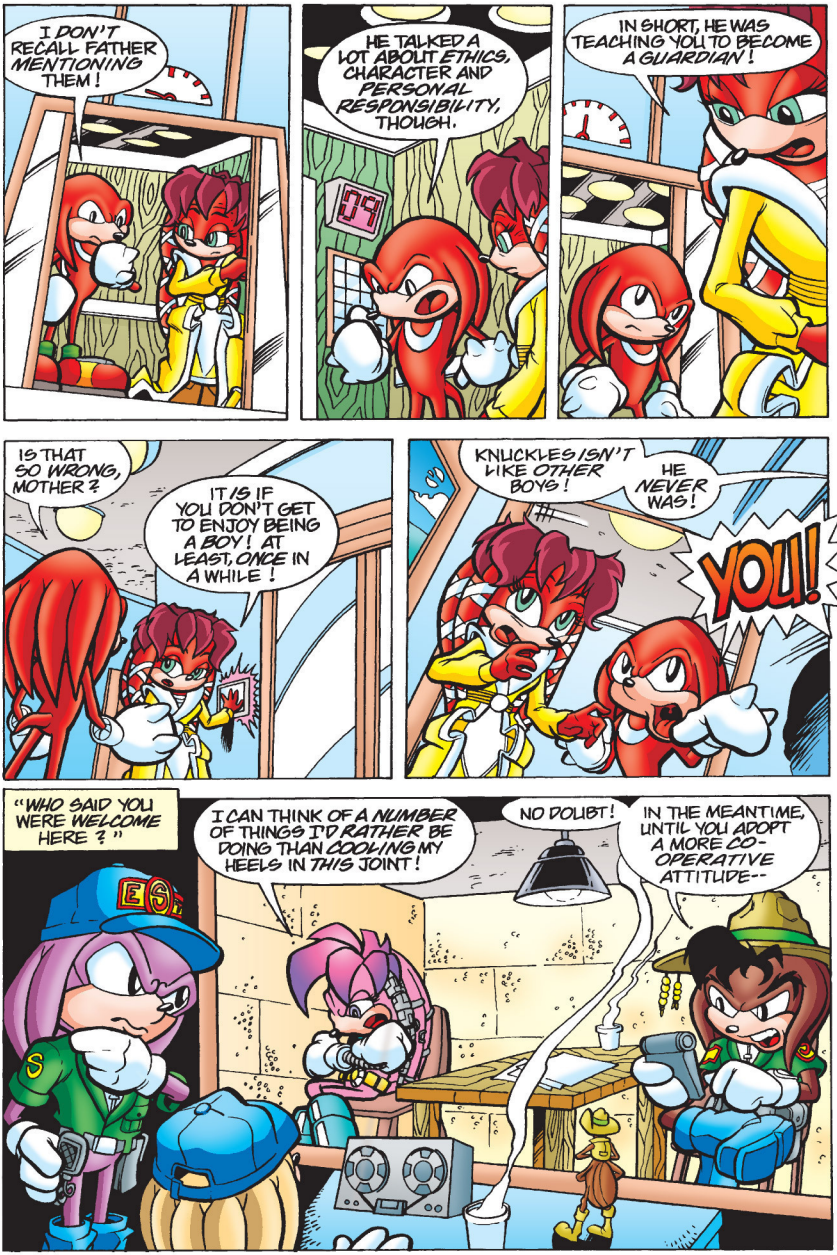

I WILL DO MY BEST!
THIS WAY, EVERYONE!
WE HAVE A LONG JOURNEY AHEAD!

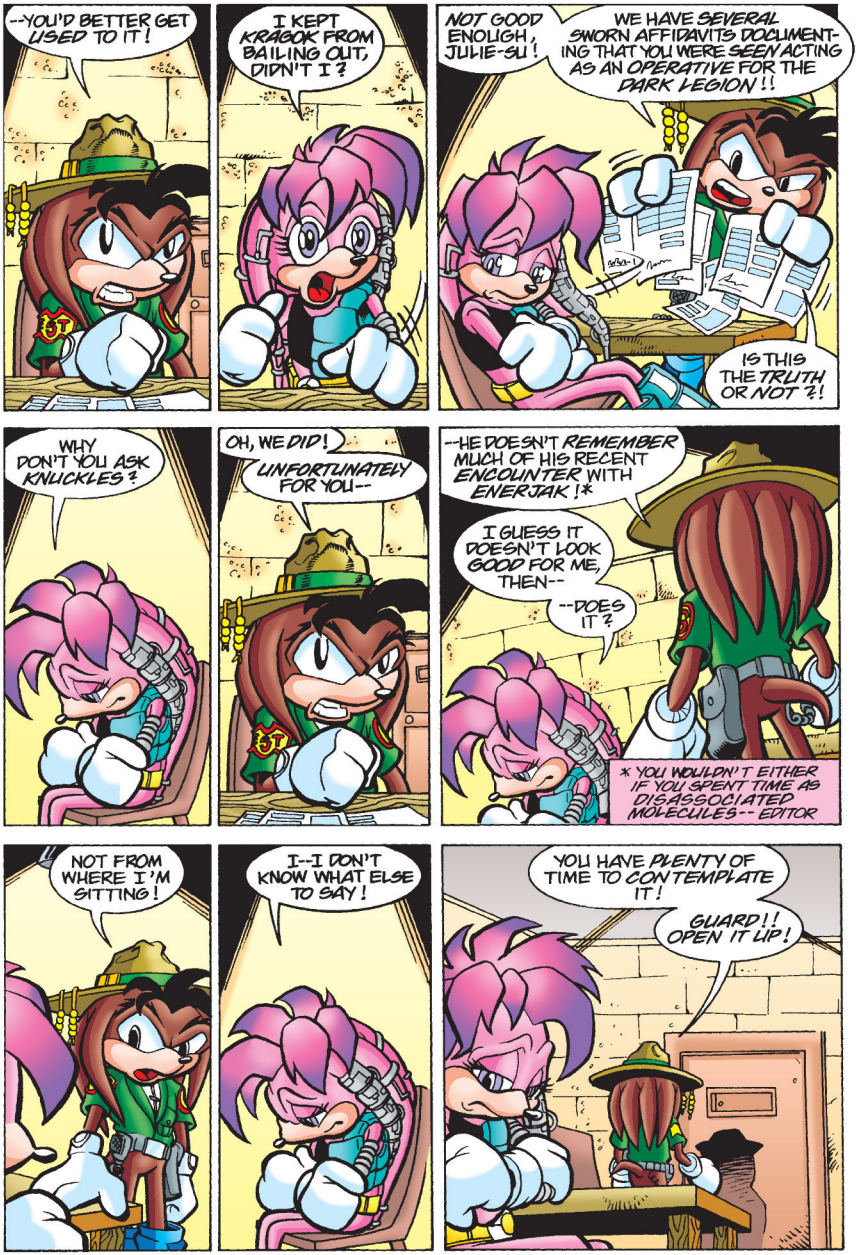

I FEEL AS IF I WERE A PARENT WATCHING A CHILD LEAVE THE NEST!


AND I COULD NOT LOVE YANAR MORE, WERE HE MY OWN SON!
I ONLY WISH SABRE HAD BEEN AS UNDERSTANDING!


THE ANCIENT ONES BECKON!
WERE YANAR READY, I WOULD HAVE HIM ASSUME MY MANTLE!
THE WALKERS HAVE DICTATED OTHERWISE--
"--AND IT IS HIM I MUST NOW TURN TO!"


KNUCKLES!
THIS IS A SURPRISE! WHATEVER BRINGS YOU HERE?
MOM!
I WAS ON MY WAY TO ECHIDNA SECURITY TEAM HQ WHEN I SAW YOU GO IN!
I DECIDED TO HANG AROUND AND WAIT FOR YOU INSTEAD!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WAIT OUTSIDE, MY SON--
--AS EVERYONE IS WELCOME INSIDE THE AURORIUM!
I JUST DIDN'T FEEL--COMFORTABLE!
CONSIDERING YOUR FATHER RAISED YOU ON THE FLOATING ISLAND INSTEAD OF ECHIDNAOPOLIS--
--I'M NOT SURPRISED!
ECHIDNA TOWERS
FATHER TAUGHT ME HISTORY, MATHEMATICS, GEOGRAPHY, THE SCIENCES--
DID HE TEACH YOU THE TOMES?

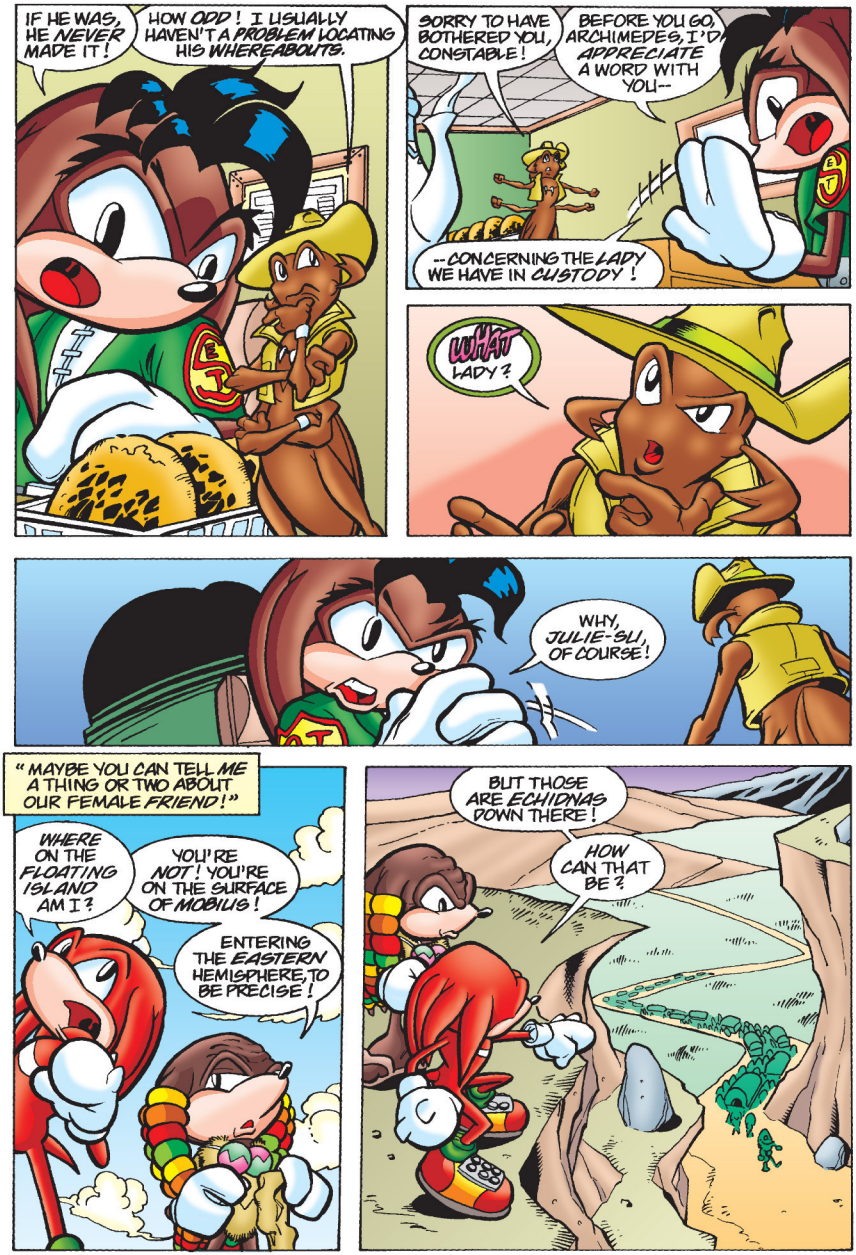

I DON'T RECALL FATHER MENTIONING THEM!
HE TALKED A LOT ABOUT ETHICS, CHARACTER AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, THOUGH.
IN SHORT, HE WAS TEACHING YOU TO BECOME A GUARDIAN!
IS THAT SO WRONG, MOTHER?
IT IS IF YOU DON'T GET TO ENJOY BEING A BOY! AT LEAST, ONCE IN A WHILE!
KNUCKLES ISN'T LIKE OTHER BOYS!
HE NEVER WAS!
YOU!
"WHO SAID YOU WERE WELCOME HERE?"
I CAN THINK OF A NUMBER OF THINGS I'D RATHER BE DOING THAN COOLING MY HEELS IN THIS JOINT!
NO DOUBT!
IN THE MEANTIME, UNTIL YOU ADOPT A MORE CO-OPERATIVE ATTITUDE--

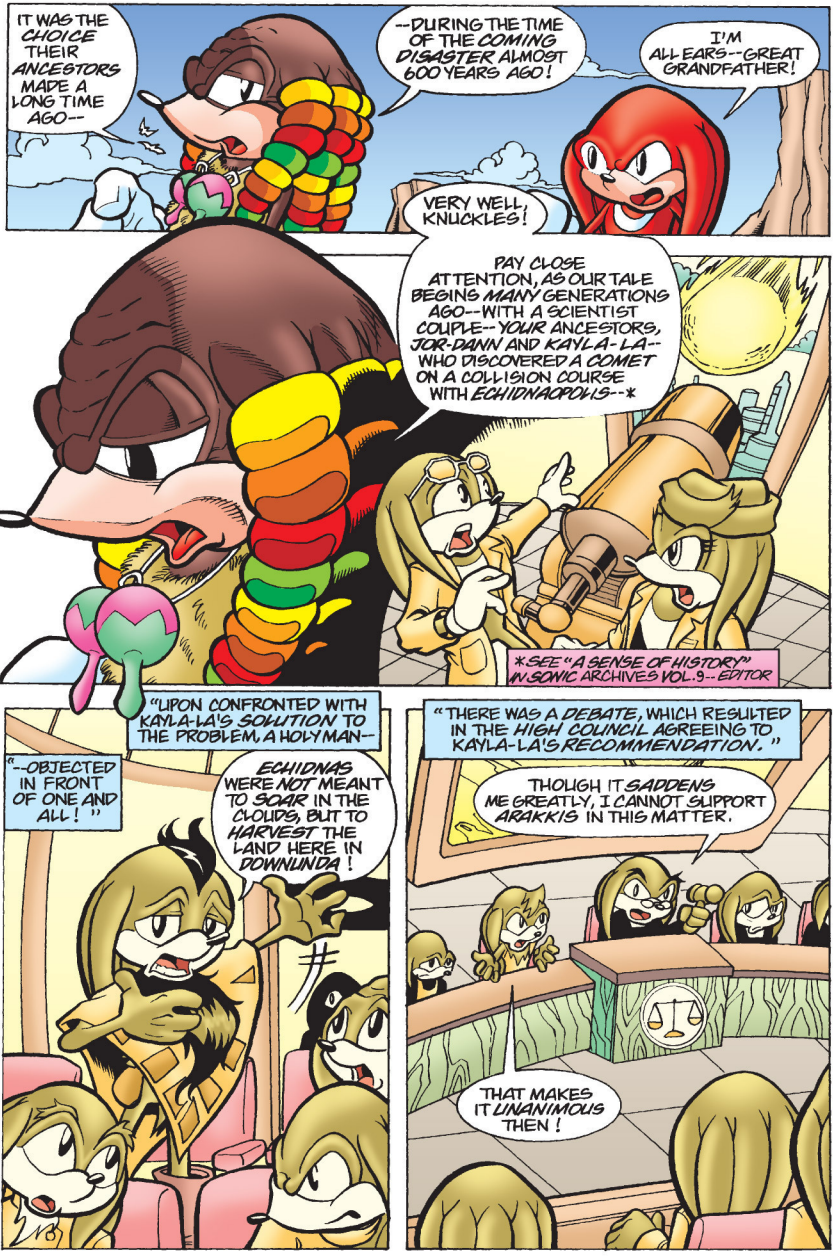

--YOU'D BETTER GET USED TO IT!
I KEPT KRAGOK FROM BAILING OUT, DIDN'T I?
NOT GOOD ENOUGH, JULIE-SU!
WE HAVE SEVERAL SWORN AFFIDAVITS DOCUMENTING THAT YOU WERE SEEN ACTING AS AN OPERATIVE FOR THE DARK LEGION!!
IS THIS THE TRUTH OR NOT?!
WHY DON'T YOU ASK KNUCKLES?
OH, WE DID!
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU--
--HE DOESN'T REMEMBER MUCH OF HIS RECENT ENCOUNTER WITH ENERJAK!*
I GUESS IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD FOR ME, THEN--
--DOES IT?
* YOU WOULDN'T EITHER IF YOU SPENT TIME AS DISASSOCIATED MOLECULES-- EDITOR
NOT FROM WHERE I'M SITTING!
I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO SAY!
YOU HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO CONTEMPLATE IT!
GUARD!! OPEN IT UP!

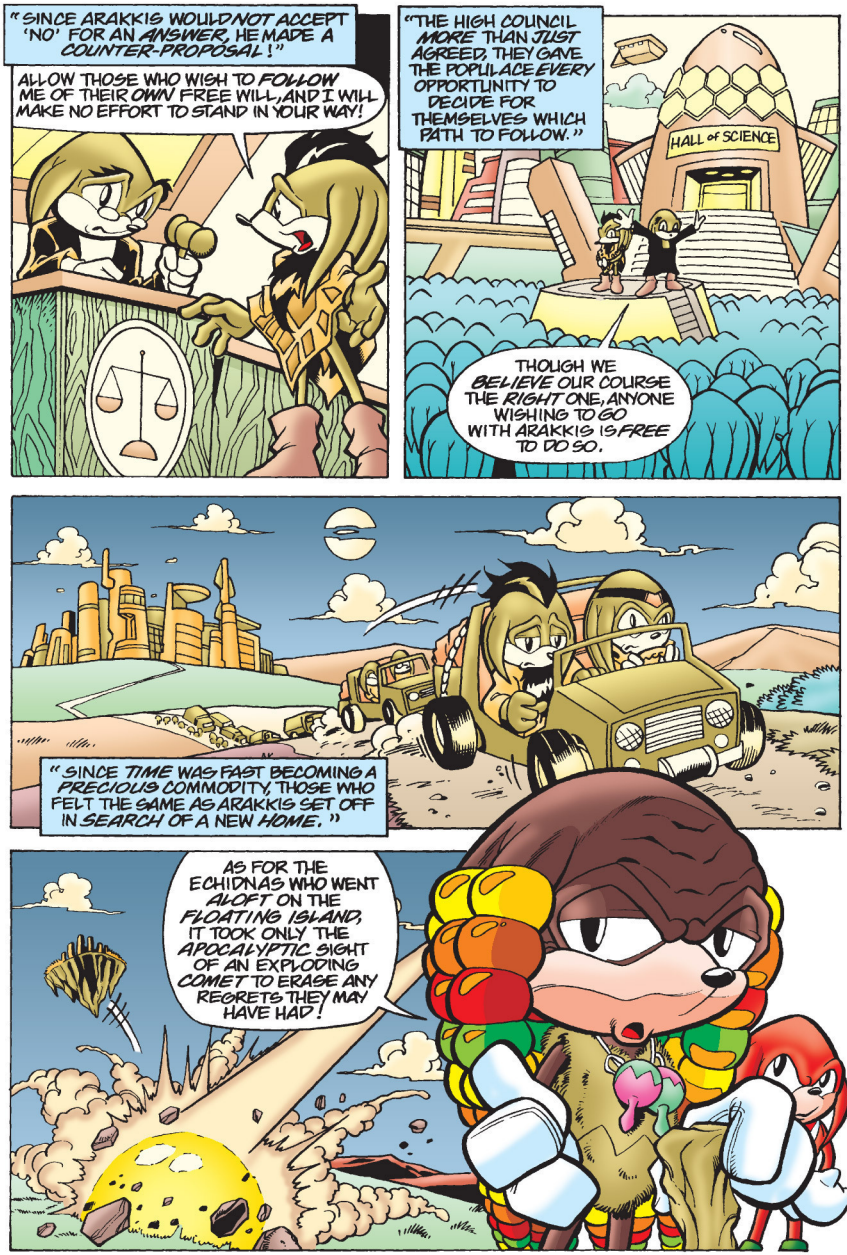
"I HAVE PRESSING MATTERS ELSEWHERE."
HELLO, LARA-LE! IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU!
AND YOU AS WELL, GRANDFATHER ATHAIR!
I WISH I COULD SAY IT WAS MUTUAL!
THAT'S NO WAY TO TALK TO YOUR GREAT GRANDFATHER!
NOW I WANT YOU TO APOLOGIZE!
KNUCKLES?!?
I'M--I'M SORRY!
THAT'S BETTER!
TO WHAT DO WE OWE THE HONOR OF YOUR PRESENCE, GRANDFATHER ATHAIR?!
IT IS THE TIME OF PROPHECY, LARA-LE!
I'VE COME FOR THE LAD!

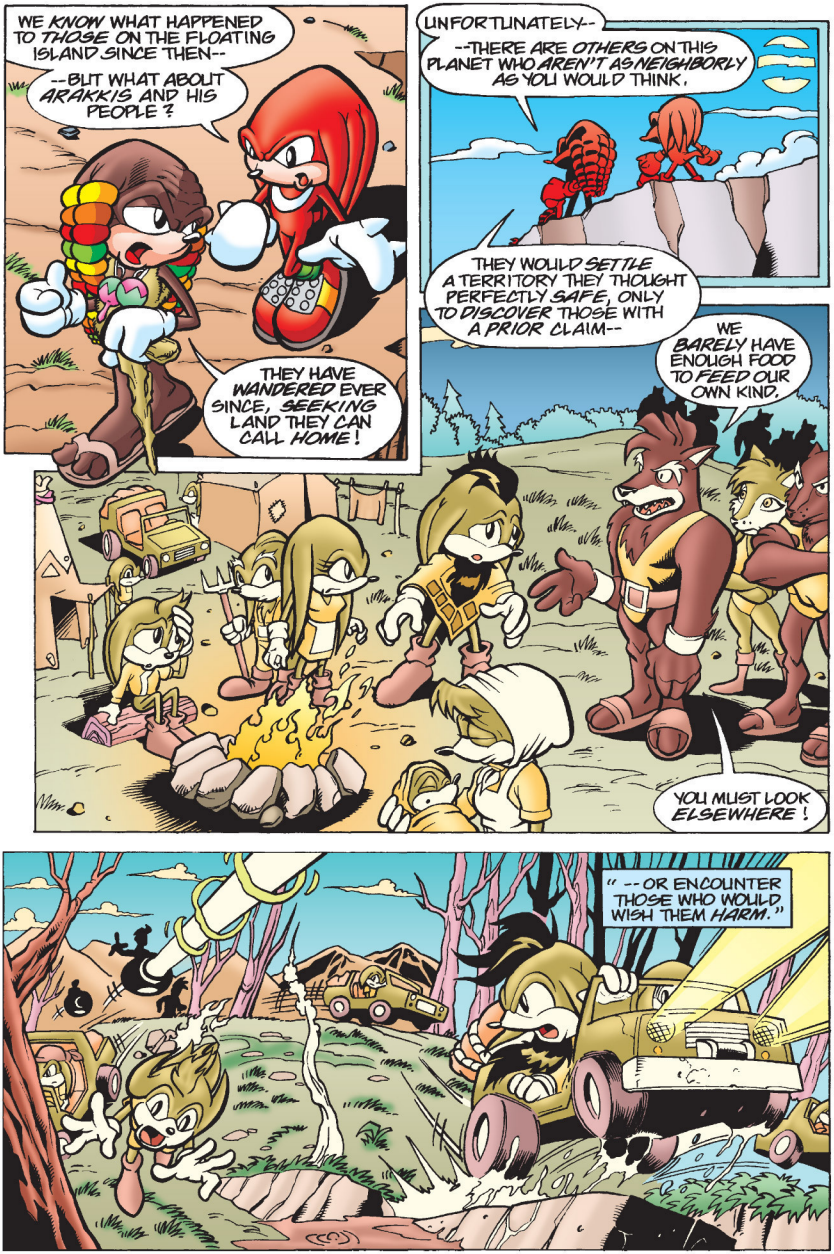
WHAT FOR ?!
I'M BUSY ENOUGH AS IT IS !
THEN YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET BUSIER !
WHA-
THUUM!
OH, KNUCKLES !
" JUST COME BACK SAFE AND SOUND TO ME ! "
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT FOR ME, TERI-LU ?

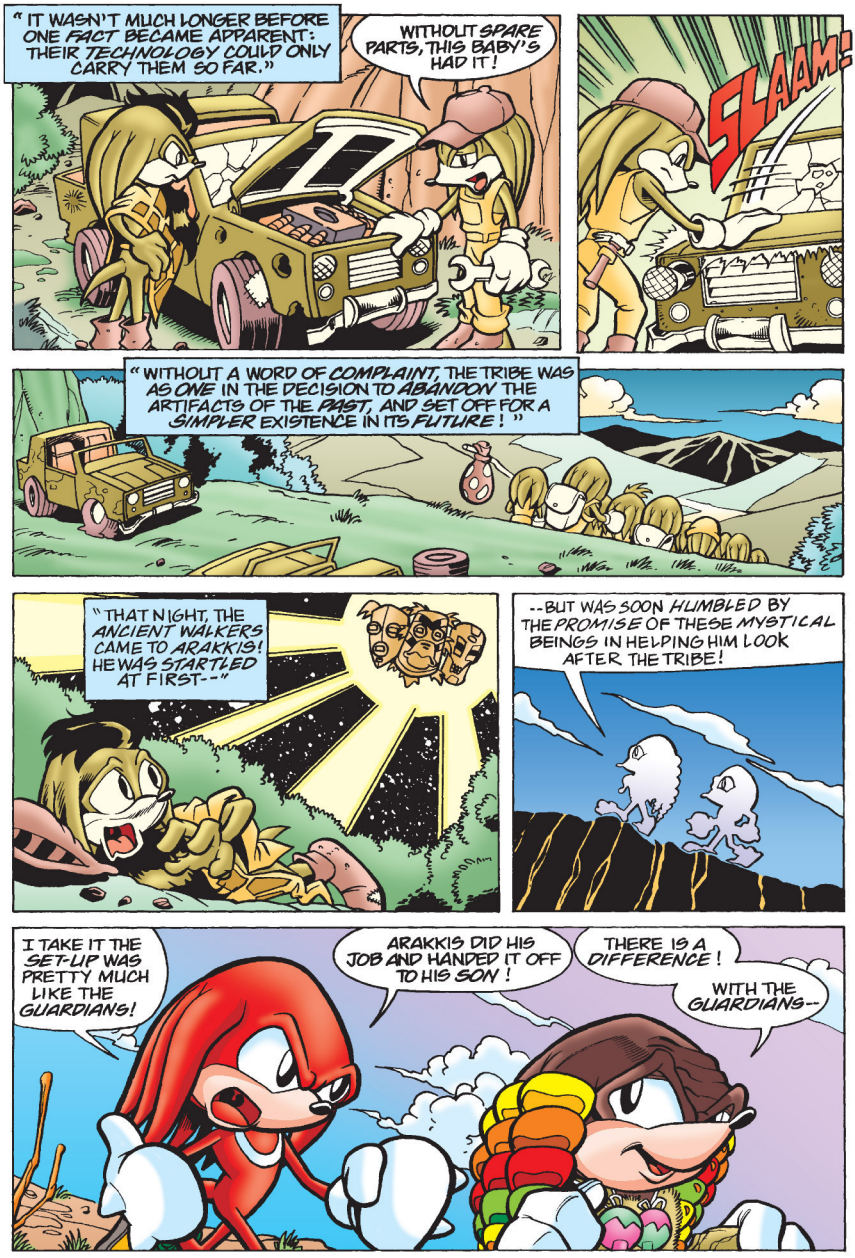
HERE'S ALL THOSE REPORTS YOU ASKED FOR, A PLATE OF OAKMUND COOKIES, A CUP OF ARGYLEAN TEA--
--AND THIS MUG SHOT!
NASTY LOOKING CREATURE! WHAT'S THE LOWDOWN ON THIS ONE?
HE DROPPED OUT OF SIGHT SINCE HIS PAROLE, AND THE CHIEF FELT YOU SHOULD HAVE SOMEONE CHECK UP ON HIM!
I AGREE! I'LL SEE TO THIS LATER TODAY!
THANK YOU, TERI-LU!
BAM!
HAVE YOU SEEN KNUCKLES, CONSTABLE? I WAS TOLD HE WAS HEADED FOR THIS STATION!

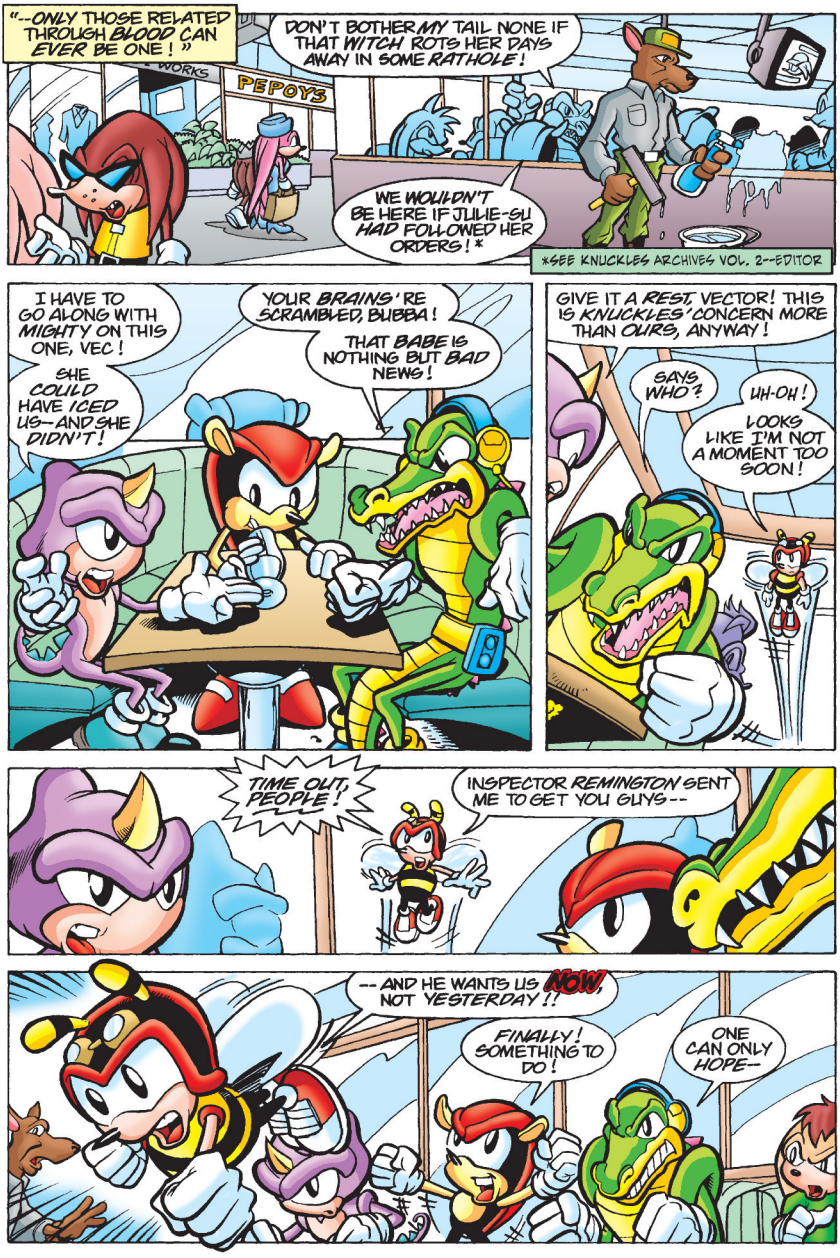

IF HE WAS, HE NEVER MADE IT!
HOW ODD! I USUALLY HAVEN'T A PROBLEM LOCATING HIS WHEREABOUTS.
SORRY TO HAVE BOTHERED YOU, CONSTABLE!
BEFORE YOU GO, ARCHIMEDES, I'D APPRECIATE A WORD WITH YOU--
--CONCERNING THE LADY WE HAVE IN CUSTODY!
WHAT
LADY?
WHY, JULIE-SU, OF COURSE!
"MAYBE YOU CAN TELL ME A THING OR TWO ABOUT OUR FEMALE FRIEND!"
WHERE ON THE FLOATING ISLAND AM I?
YOU'RE NOT! YOU'RE ON THE SURFACE OF MOBIUS!
ENTERING THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE, TO BE PRECISE!
BUT THOSE ARE ECHIDNAS DOWN THERE!
HOW CAN THAT BE?

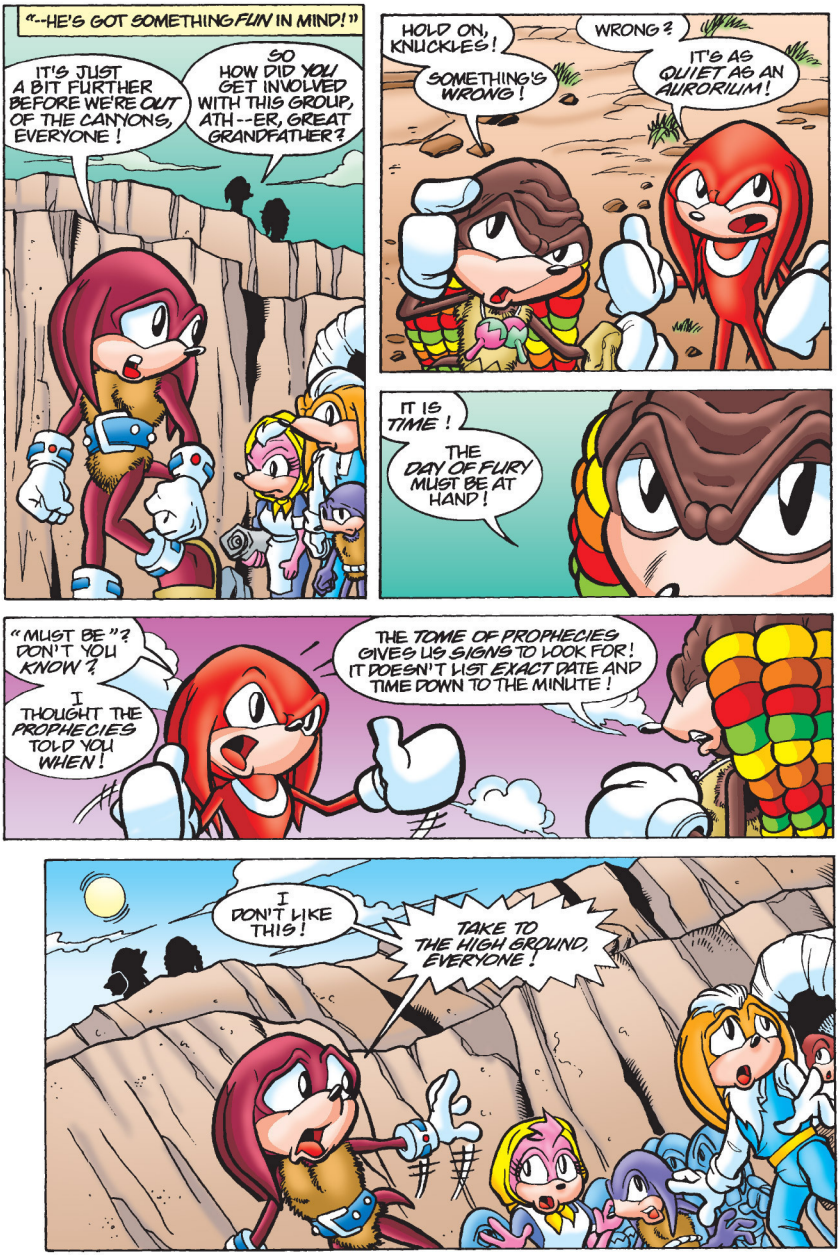

IT WAS THE CHOICE THEIR ANCESTORS MADE A LONG TIME AGO--
--DURING THE TIME OF THE COMING DISASTER ALMOST 600 YEARS AGO!
I'M ALL EARS--GREAT GRANDFATHER!
VERY WELL, KNUCKLES!
PAY CLOSE ATTENTION, AS OUR TALE BEGINS MANY GENERATIONS AGO--WITH A SCIENTIST COUPLE--YOUR ANCESTORS, JOR-DANN AND KAYLA-LA--WHO DISCOVERED A COMET ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH ECHIDNAOPOLIS--*
*SEE "A SENSE OF HISTORY" IN SONIC ARCHIVES VOL.9--EDITOR
"UPON CONFRONTED WITH KAYLA-LA'S SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, A HOLY MAN--
"--OBJECTED IN FRONT OF ONE AND ALL!"
ECHIDNAS WERE NOT MEANT TO SOAR IN THE CLOUDS, BUT TO HARVEST THE LAND HERE IN DOWNUNDA!
"THERE WAS A DEBATE, WHICH RESULTED IN THE HIGH COUNCIL AGREEING TO KAYLA-LA'S RECOMMENDATION."
THOUGH IT SADDENS ME GREATLY, I CANNOT SUPPORT ARAKKIS IN THIS MATTER.
THAT MAKES IT UNANIMOUS THEN!

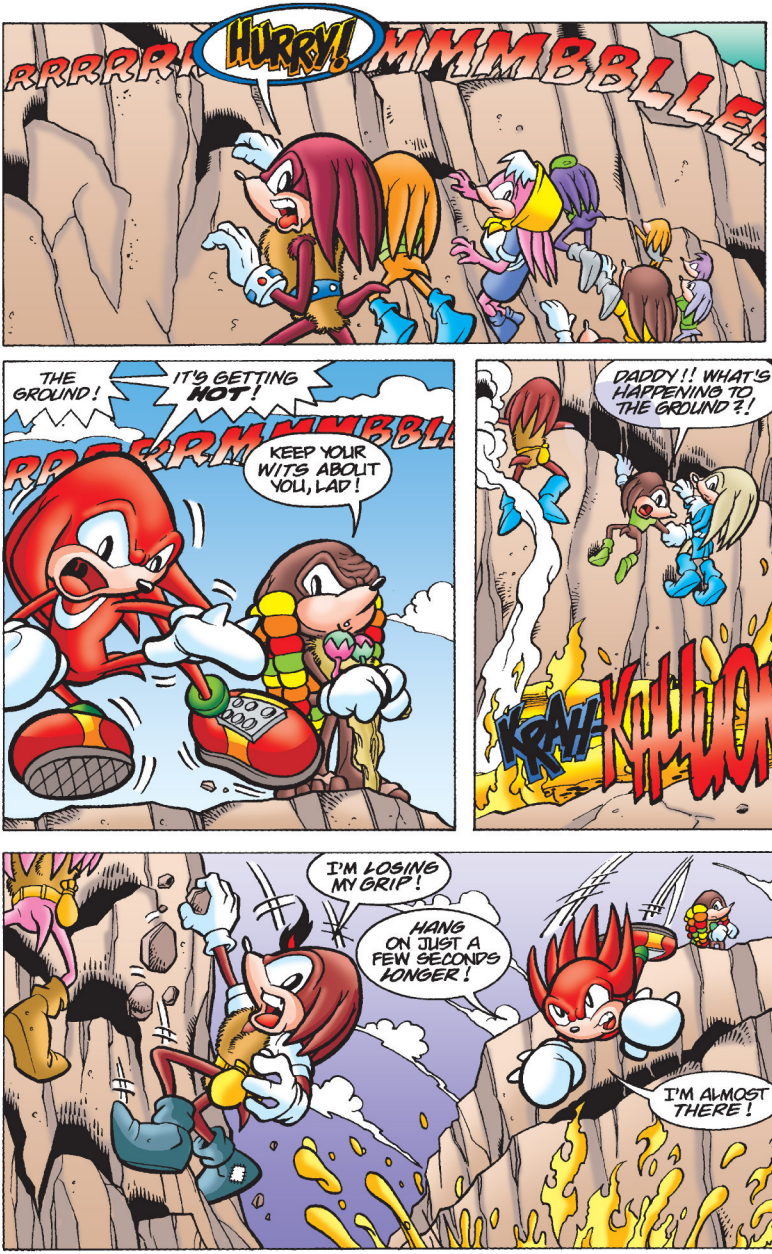

"SINCE ARAKKIS WOULD NOT ACCEPT 'NO' FOR AN ANSWER, HE MADE A COUNTER-PROPOSAL!"
ALLOW THOSE WHO WISH TO FOLLOW ME OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL, AND I WILL MAKE NO EFFORT TO STAND IN YOUR WAY!
"THE HIGH COUNCIL MORE THAN JUST AGREED, THEY GAVE THE POPULACE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES WHICH PATH TO FOLLOW."
HALL of SCIENCE
THOUGH WE BELIEVE OUR COURSE THE RIGHT ONE, ANYONE WISHING TO GO WITH ARAKKIS IS FREE TO DO SO.
"SINCE TIME WAS FAST BECOMING A PRECIOUS COMMODITY, THOSE WHO FELT THE SAME AS ARAKKIS SET OFF IN SEARCH OF A NEW HOME."
AS FOR THE ECHIDNAS WHO WENT ALOFT ON THE FLOATING ISLAND, IT TOOK ONLY THE APOCALYPTIC SIGHT OF AN EXPLODING COMET TO ERASE ANY REGRETS THEY MAY HAVE HAD!

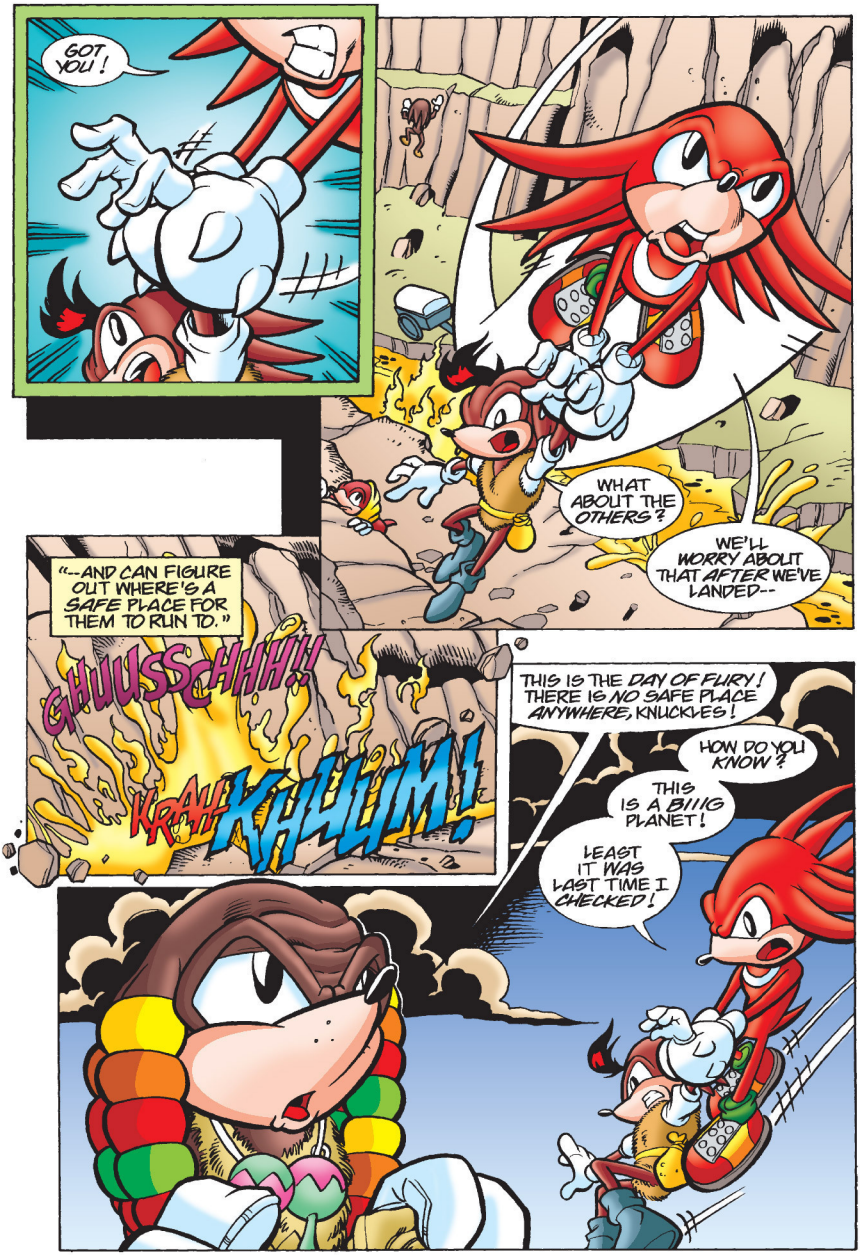

WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE ON THE FLOATING ISLAND SINCE THEN--
--BUT WHAT ABOUT ARAKKIS AND HIS PEOPLE?
THEY HAVE WANDERED EVER SINCE, SEEKING LAND THEY CAN CALL HOME!
UNFORTUNATELY--
--THERE ARE OTHERS ON THIS PLANET WHO AREN'T AS NEIGHBORLY AS YOU WOULD THINK.
THEY WOULD SETTLE A TERRITORY THEY THOUGHT PERFECTLY SAFE, ONLY TO DISCOVER THOSE WITH A PRIOR CLAIM--
WE BARELY HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO FEED OUR OWN KIND.
YOU MUST LOOK ELSEWHERE!
"--OR ENCOUNTER THOSE WHO WOULD WISH THEM HARM."

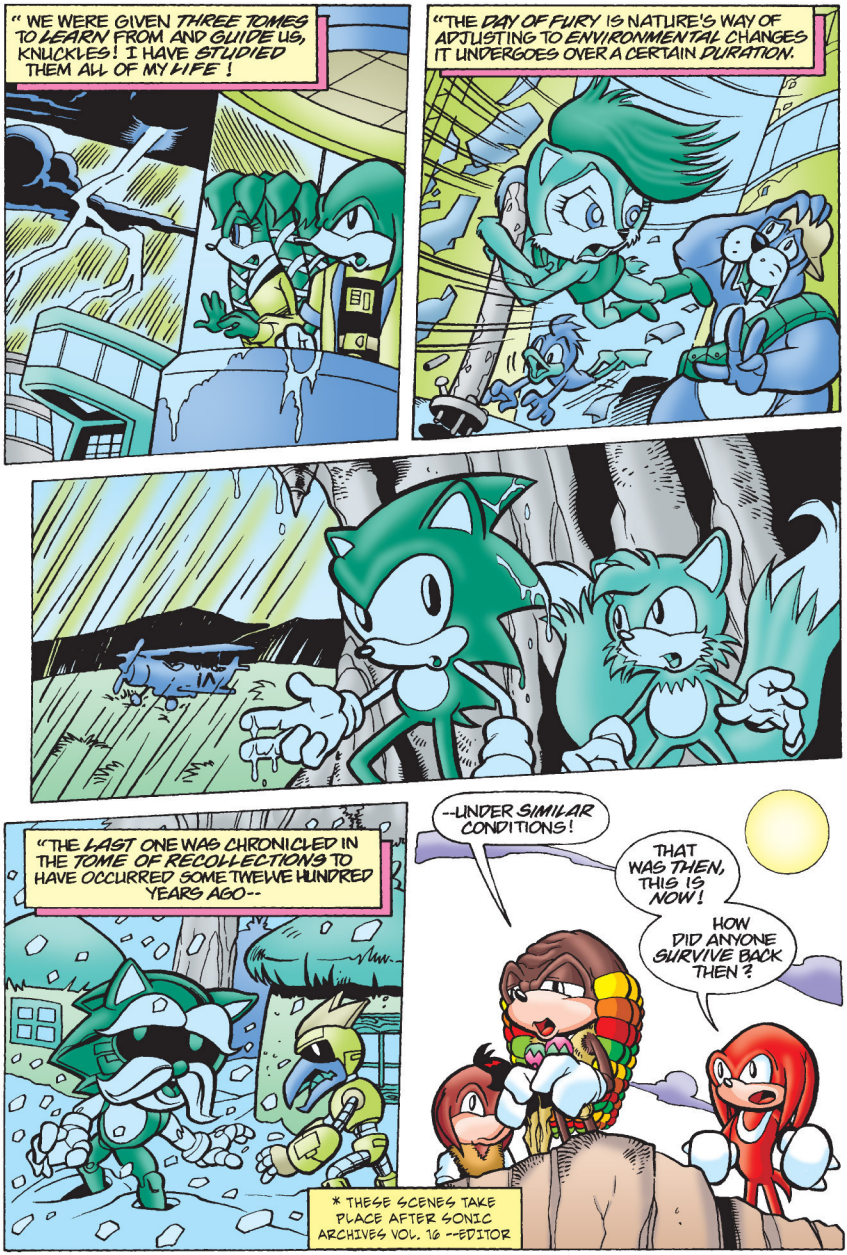

"IT WASN'T MUCH LONGER BEFORE ONE FACT BECAME APPARENT: THEIR TECHNOLOGY COULD ONLY CARRY THEM SO FAR."
WITHOUT SPARE PARTS, THIS BABY'S HAD IT!
SLAAM!
"WITHOUT A WORD OF COMPLAINT, THE TRIBE WAS AS ONE IN THE DECISION TO ABANDON THE ARTIFACTS OF THE PAST, AND SET OFF FOR A SIMPLER EXISTENCE IN ITS FUTURE!"
"THAT NIGHT, THE ANCIENT WALKERS CAME TO ARAKKIS! HE WAS STARTLED AT FIRST--"
--BUT WAS SOON HUMBLED BY THE PROMISE OF THESE MYSTICAL BEINGS IN HELPING HIM LOOK AFTER THE TRIBE!
I TAKE IT THE SET-UP WAS PRETTY MUCH LIKE THE GUARDIANS!
ARAKKIS DID HIS JOB AND HANDED IT OFF TO HIS SON!
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE!
WITH THE GUARDIANS--


"--ONLY THOSE RELATED THROUGH BLOOD CAN EVER BE ONE!"
WORKS
PEPOY'S
DON'T BOTHER MY TAIL NONE IF THAT WITCH ROTS HER DAYS AWAY IN SOME RATHOLE!
WE WOULDN'T BE HERE IF JULIE-SU HAD FOLLOWED HER ORDERS! *
*SEE KNUCKLES ARCHIVES VOL. 2--EDITOR
I HAVE TO GO ALONG WITH MIGHTY ON THIS ONE, VEC!
SHE COULD HAVE ICED US--AND SHE DIDN'T!
YOUR BRAINS' RE SCRAMBLED, BUBBA!
THAT BABE IS NOTHING BUT BAD NEWS!
GIVE IT A REST, VECTOR! THIS IS KNUCKLES' CONCERN MORE THAN OURS, ANYWAY!
SAYS WHO?
UH-OH!
LOOKS LIKE I'M NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!
TIME OUT, PEOPLE!
INSPECTOR REMINGTON SENT ME TO GET YOU GUYS--
-- AND HE WANTS US NOW! NOT YESTERDAY!!
FINALLY! SOMETHING TO DO!
ONE CAN ONLY HOPE--


"--HE'S GOT SOMETHING FUN IN MIND!"
IT'S JUST A BIT FURTHER BEFORE WE'RE OUT OF THE CANYONS, EVERYONE!
SO HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THIS GROUP, ATH--ER, GREAT GRANDFATHER?
HOLD ON, KNUCKLES!
SOMETHING'S WRONG!
WRONG?
IT'S AS QUIET AS AN AURORIUM!
IT IS TIME!
THE DAY OF FURY MUST BE AT HAND!
"MUST BE"? DON'T YOU KNOW?
I THOUGHT THE PROPHECIES TOLD YOU WHEN!
THE TOME OF PROPHECIES GIVES US SIGNS TO LOOK FOR! IT DOESN'T LIST EXACT DATE AND TIME DOWN TO THE MINUTE!
I DON'T LIKE THIS!
TAKE TO THE HIGH GROUND, EVERYONE!


RRRRR
HURRY!
MMMBBLE
THE GROUND!
IT'S GETTING HOT!
KEEP YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU, LAD!
DADDY!! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE GROUND?!
KRAK
KHUUOM!
I'M LOSING MY GRIP!
HANG ON JUST A FEW SECONDS LONGER!
I'M ALMOST THERE!


GOT YOU!
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS?
WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THAT AFTER WE'VE LANDED--
"--AND CAN FIGURE OUT WHERE'S A SAFE PLACE FOR THEM TO RUN TO."
GHUUSSCHHH!!
KRAH KHUUM!
THIS IS THE DAY OF FURY! THERE IS NO SAFE PLACE ANYWHERE, KNUCKLES!
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
THIS IS A BIIIG PLANET!
LEAST IT WAS LAST TIME I CHECKED!


" WE WERE GIVEN THREE TOMES TO LEARN FROM AND GUIDE US, KNUCKLES! I HAVE STUDIED THEM ALL OF MY LIFE!
"THE DAY OF FURY IS NATURE'S WAY OF ADJUSTING TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES IT UNDERGOES OVER A CERTAIN DURATION.
"THE LAST ONE WAS CHRONICLED IN THE TOME OF RECOLLECTIONS TO HAVE OCCURRED SOME TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO--
--UNDER SIMILAR CONDITIONS!
THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW!
HOW DID ANYONE SURVIVE BACK THEN?
* THESE SCENES TAKE PLACE AFTER SONIC ARCHIVES VOL. 16 --EDITOR

MOST DIDN'T!
OH, GREAT!!!
SEVERAL HUNDRED ECHIDNAS ABOUT TO BE BURNED TO A CRISP--
--AND YOU SAY IT'S A LOST CAUSE!
NO WAY, ATHAIR!!! WE GOTTA DO SOMETHING!
BAD SCENE, MAN! BAAAD SCENE!
TO BE CONTINUED...